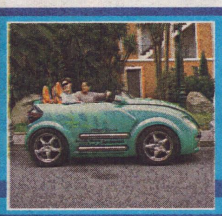
No 652 March 10, 2002

THE FUNDAY TIMES



Shrinking car
Funday discovers the revolutionary new vehicle that can reduce its size
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From Milian
From AM To PM, American star Christina Milian has time to talk to us!
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Whisker away
It's Wild Cat Week on Discovery Animal Planet so we paws to look at some big cats
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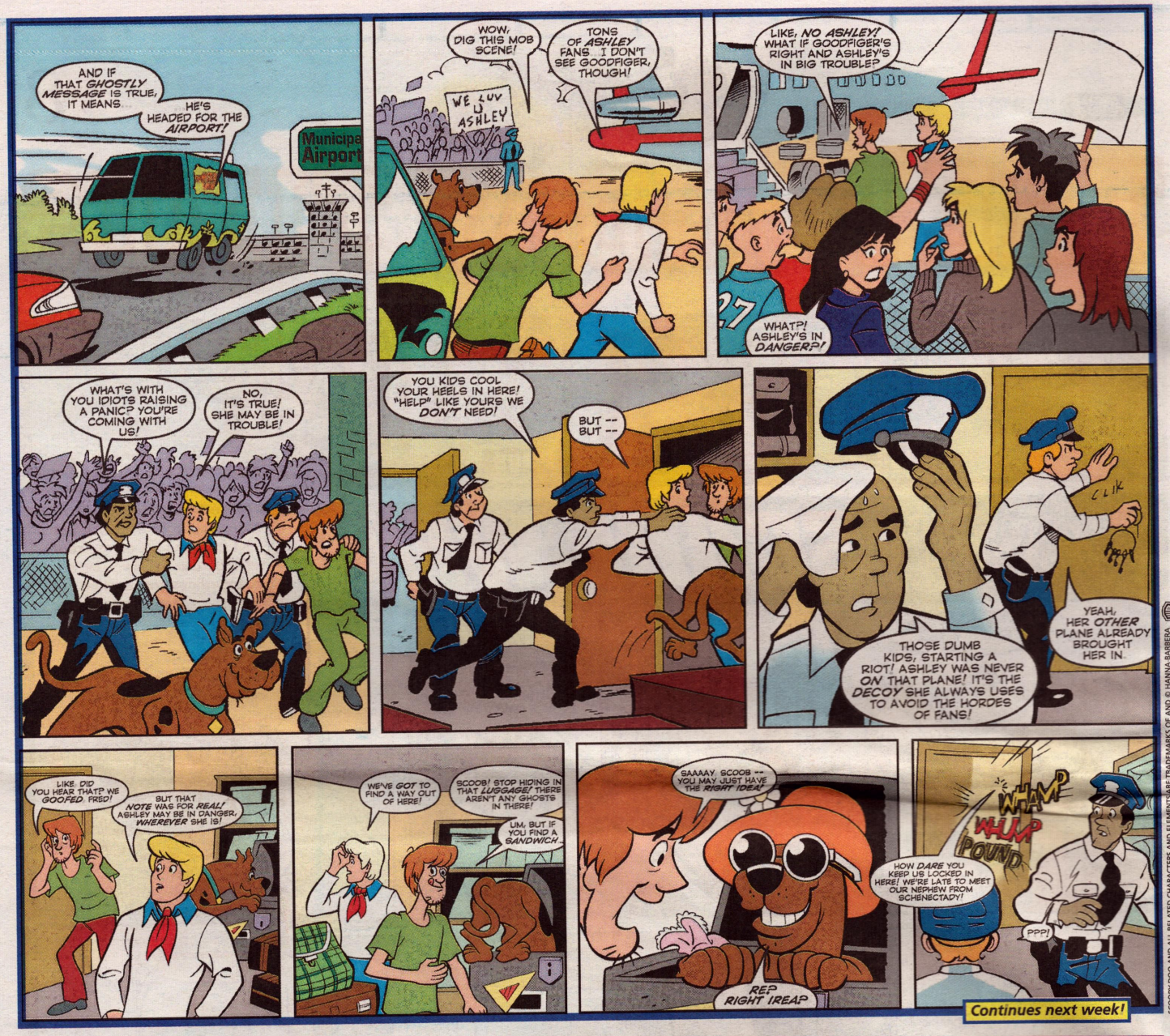
SCOOBY-DOO! in SCARE WEAR

The story so far – Scooby-Doo and the gang are on the case of superstar Ashley Stunn's haunted designer outfits!

More inside



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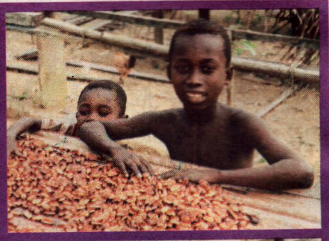
CHOCOLATE AID

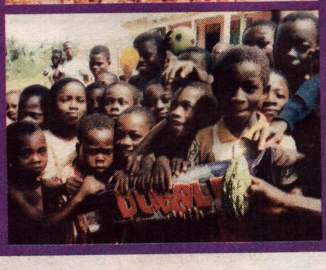
In the UK, we each munch our way through 16kg of chocolate every year, spending a total of £3.6 billion on the delicious treat! So, if you feel guilty chomping your way through all those bars, why not also put your pocket-money to good use, helping impoverished farmers from Ghana, West Africa, who produce the cocoa beans?

It's Fairtrade Fortnight until March 17 which is the annual campaign to raise awareness of the Fairtrade chocolate bar, Dubble, produced by Comic Relief and The Day Chocolate Company [partly owned by Ghanaian farmers]. As a Fairtrade product, Dubble helps to give 40,000 Ghanaian cocoa farmers a fair, secure and guaranteed price for their cocoa, giving struggling families and communities the comfort of knowing what their labour will yield – helping them to plan for a better future.

"I get up at 5.30am to help my mother before I go to school," says 10-year-old Mary Antwi, whose father is one of those benefiting from Fairtrade. "When my father is busy I like to help weed the forest and I help pick the cocoa pods off the trees. Cocoa is very important to my life. When you buy Dubble it means my father gets paid fairly for his cocoa and so I can go to school and have a better life."

Think you've got the Fairtrade message? If so, there's still time to enter our Dubble Vision competition! Together with Comic Relief and Nickelodeon, you can direct pop sensation Samantha Mumba in a 30-second TV ad all about Dubble and Fairtrade and see it aired on Nickelodeon. For full details, click on www.dubble.co.uk or www.nickelodeon.co.uk. The closing date is March 22.





PICTURES: PETE STEVENS, KIKA DIXON

How are Scooby, Shaggy and Fred going to escape?

FUNDAY

NEWS

We have lift-off!

The Yuri Gagarin Training Centre in Star City, Russia, is open this week to tourists who are keen to experience zero gravity. The centre offers six parabolic flights each year to the general public. Ian Collier, of Wild Wings, Bristol, one of the travel agents who organise trips to the centre, has taken one such flight. "The plane puts its nose in the air and flies upwards – vertically," explains Ian. "That's when you feel really heavy because you're experiencing two Gs." Next, the plane levels out to begin its journey back down and a siren sounds. "That means prepare for 30 seconds of zero gravity," says Ian. "I flew like Superman and walked upside-down on the ceiling – it was a wonderful feeling." The plane repeats the parabola – the path of an object thrown into the air – 10 times! Hold on to your lunch!

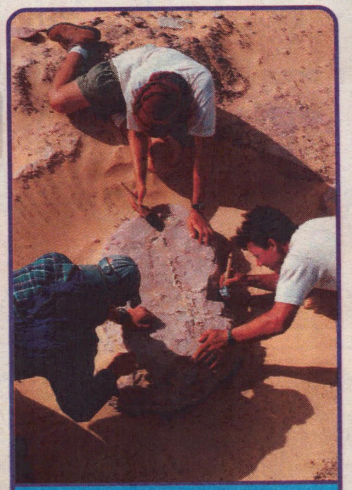
PICTURES: REUTERS, PA/MIKE HETTWER COURTESY OF PROJECT EXPLORATION, ©REX FEATURES

Prepare for Air

Air – the new ride opening at Alton Towers on Saturday – has taken eight years to complete and John Wardley, rollercoaster designer and "imagineer", was behind its manufacture every step of the way.

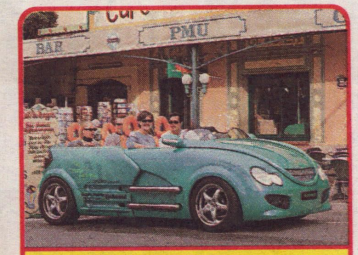
"Everyone has dreamt of being able to fly and the idea of creating a ride that gave people the taste of flight seemed wonderful," explains John. It took four years of research to prove that it was possible to make Air. "We had to be 100% sure that it would work before committing to it," he tells Funday.

John knew the ride could work but he worried that it wouldn't create the desired sensations. "Until you ride it you don't know whether it will work," says John. "It was a great relief when I rode it. I was amazed, it's like nothing I've ever experienced before. You literally feel like you're flying."



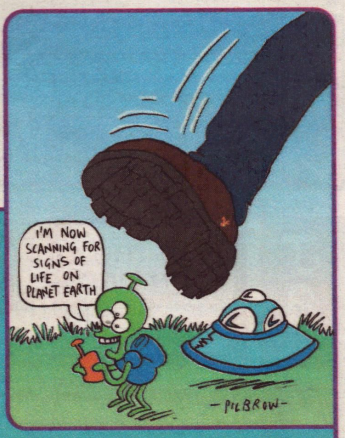
Mighty mower

An expedition has unearthed the Nigersaurus, a plant-eating dinosaur which roamed what is now the Sahara Desert, between 146 million and 65 million years ago. The dinosaur, which measured up to 13m long and weighed around 5 tonnes, had more than 1,000 teeth. It has been nicknamed "the lawnmower" because of the way it stripped vegetation to eat ferns and tree leaves. Dr Paul Sereno, one of the expedition's dinosaur hunters, found the complete fossilised skeleton in a remote area of Niger and is flabbergasted by its discovery. "I've never seen anything like it," says Dr Sereno. "It must have been a really remarkable animal. Nigersaurus needed all those teeth as plant-eaters must cut up vegetation before swallowing it." The expedition also unearthed a new species of dog-sized dinosaur [above] nicknamed Dogomimus, meaning dog mimic.



Hey Presto!

Thanks to the Presto, the incredible shrinking car from a Swiss car design firm, finding a car-parking space may never be a problem again. Drivers will never have to worry about whether their car will fit into a tight parking spot, because the Presto can downsize from 4m to 3m in length! The car shrinks by using an electric motor which transforms it from a four-seater to a two-seater, in seconds. Designed to make people happy, the Presto has a smiling face on its bonnet and runs on an environmentally-friendly mix of natural gas and diesel.

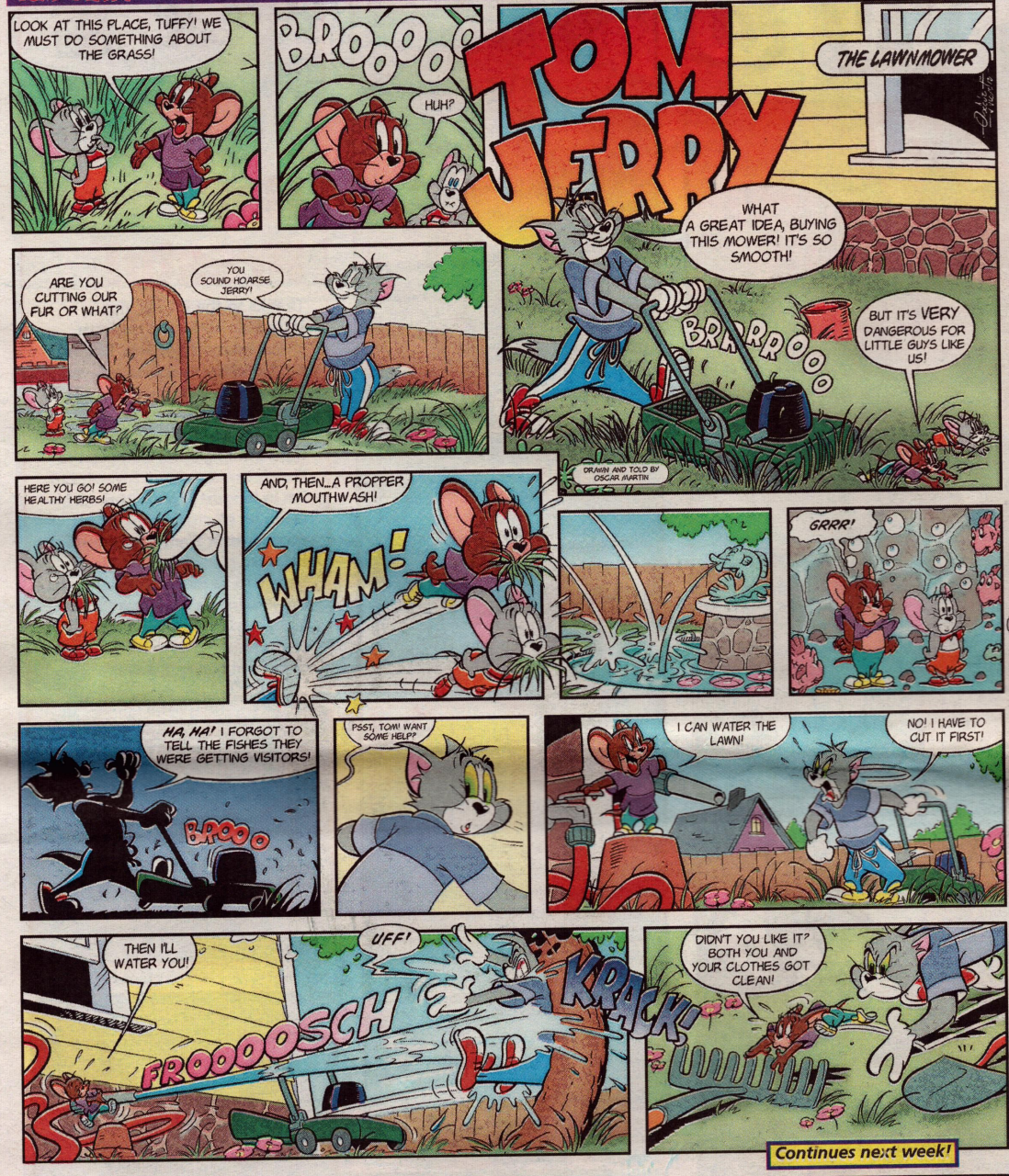


Hello, Earthlings

While astronomers on Earth are probably years away from discovering life on other planets, Dr Robert Angel, an American scientist from the University of Arizona, believes that alien astronomers from other solar systems already know that we exist. "I'm convinced that if there were aliens with technology a bit more advanced than ours they would know that there's life on this planet," Dr Robert told fellow scientists at America's biggest science meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.

As soon as you ride Air at Alton Towers, let us know what you think!

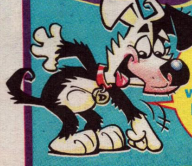
TOM and JERRY: THE LAWNMOWER



Continues next week!

TOM AND JERRY AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS AND ELEMENTS ARE TRADEMARKS OF AND © TURNER ENTERTAINMENT CO (S02)

DAGSY DOG



Woof, woof! It's my last column this week – but I'll be back in Funday, later this year!

I'm e-mailing about my two-year-old dog, Blue. We saw Blue in a dog's home and, when we heard that he had previously been beaten and starved, we brought him home. Blue started cornering me and my brother but he's fine with mum and dad. He still growls at me sometimes and guards his food. Why does he do this?

Charlotte Hall, 12, Kent

Cruelty cases can be quite difficult to cope with and you must always be quite cautious when handling Blue. Blue may associate young people with being hit, so you need to build up his confidence. The most important thing is that you are very careful when around him and do not get bitten. Always speak quietly and calmly when you approach him and do not corner him. Don't approach him from above, which may be a threat. Do not stare at his eyes because this could also seem like a challenge.

Advice by Blue Cross vet Mark Bossley

Dagsy Dog is now taking a break from Funday. To find out what new character is joining the Funday gang, read next week's issue!

The Blue Cross, one of Britain's oldest animal welfare charities, has four animal hospitals, 11 adoption centres, and two equine centres. Last year, the charity found homes for 8,000 animals and treated more than 60,000 pets at its hospitals.

ILLUSTRATIONS: PAUL CEMMICK

Jarvis

©KNIGHT FEATURES

Dagsy's off on his hols, so prepare for an exciting new column launching in Funday next week!

TEEN DREAM

She counts Britney and *NSYNC as mates, she's written her own hit single – plus another for J-Lo – and she's got a budding TV and movie career too. Christina Milian tells Emma Lucas why she's having the time of her life

Hi Christina, you're only just 20 – how did you become so successful at such a young age?
I started young. Ever since I can remember, all I've wanted to do was entertain. When watching TV, I always thought the newscaster was looking at me. I thought my life was like a movie with everyone watching me. One day my mum actually caught me trying to get inside the TV. I think I was about four years old.

You wrote the hit, Play for J-Lo, but who would you most like to work with now?
Janet Jackson. She is the ultimate and I have idolised her since I was really little. I have all her albums.

What inspires your song writing?
Lots of things. Different friendships or stuff that friends have told me. It's so much about growing up, you know, stuff that anybody and everybody can relate to. There's one song on my album called When You Look At Me. I just love that song, and I'm saying that you should never judge a book by its cover. I think that's a really important message.

How do you go about actually writing songs?
I'll think of a melody in the weirdest places, and sometimes I have to leave a message for myself on my answering machine. It took me 10 minutes to write J-Lo's Play, but that's not normal. I didn't have anyone in mind when writing that song, but someone from her label called up and said they wanted the song. I wasn't expecting that.

What's your next single going to be?
When You Look At Me. It's me saying to someone: "What do you see when you look at me, tell me what you see, you still don't know me." That's all I'm saying in this song. I'm filming the video in Los Angeles, which should be fun because I haven't been back in a while.

And what about a tour?
I toured with *NSYNC for two and a half months last year, and I'm going to Japan with Britney Spears next month. I'm also going to be touring with Usher later this month. It's the best thing performing live. I have so much fun on stage. I feel like I'm in my own little world. You feel like: "I wrote this song, and people are singing it." It's dope!

Pop divas J-Lo and Mariah are renowned for their outrageous demands – have you ever pulled a diva-like fit?
No way! Whatever is in my dressing room, whatever they provide, is what I have. I like to have water, but really I don't ask for much more, only fruit. I don't have a large entourage either.

How do you keep your feet on the ground?
With family. I take my mum everywhere with me. And I call my friends all the time. When I'm at home, they always want to hang out and stuff, but I'm so happy to be home that I just want to stay in. If anything, I'll go to the movies with my sisters – but I also like to hang out with my dogs!

Where would you like to be in five years time?
I would like to be on my third album by then and working on my own world tour. My goal right now is to have a big show, but I'd love to continue to write for other artists. I've heard that Mary J Blige was interested in working with me, so that would be really dope! Even now, I have so much more to talk about – I can't wait to make my second album.

More star interviews in Funday next week!

RUNNING WILD!

Wild Cat Week kicks off on Discovery Animal Planet tomorrow – Funday takes a look at the life of some of nature's most magnificent creatures ... and the dangers they face

ESCAPING THE POACHERS

In past centuries, tigers ruled a third of the world's wilderness. Today, the big cats and their rainforests have virtually been wiped out.

Thailand's Khao Yai National Park contains more than 2,000 square kilometres of tropical rainforest, and just a few remaining Indochinese tigers.

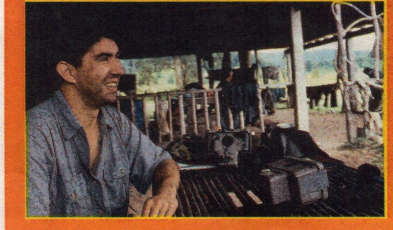
Conservationists aren't just fighting the poachers who kill tigers for profit though – they must also find new occupations for those families who have lived by hunting and gathering from the rainforest for generations. Rare aloewood is the magnet that lures most poachers into Khao Yai. A cap of aloe oil is worth two week's wages, so poachers harvest the tree, robbing the tigers of their natural environment in the process.

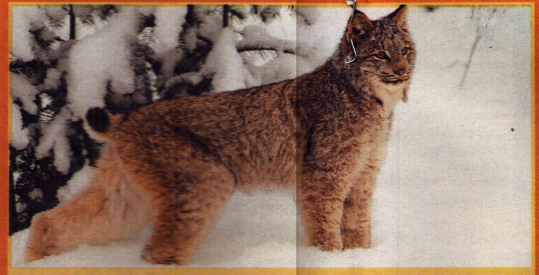
Tony Lynam [below], from the Wildlife Conservation Society, has been working to save the tigers of Khao Yai for more than three years. "When we came to Khao Yai, people told us we'd be sure to find tigers – five years ago tigers were seen on nature trails and along the roads. But when we looked, it took us a couple of months before we even found our first set of tracks."

Using camera traps, Tony and his team are identifying the tigers in the forest and the humans who threaten them. And in a bold move, Tony is recruiting ex-poachers to become gamekeepers at Khao Yai. "The best conservationists are often the people who hunted the wildlife. They're the people who actually get us the information we need to make decisions," he reasons.

And Tony's tactics are paying off. As one ex-poacher says: "I feel bad about what I've done. I know I have committed sins against animals in this forest which can't be undone. But now I work for Tony, I catch animals with cameras not guns."

EYE OF THE TIGER, Thursday, 8pm





SMALL SURVIVORS

Not all wild cats are large. There are 32 kinds of small cats, the smallest of which is the African black-footed cat which weighs only 2kg. The main difference between big and small cats is that the latter are not only predators, they are prey as well. And so, each small cat has developed its own unique survival skills.

The Eurasian lynx [above] lives in Sweden. In winter, temperatures can fall as low as -30C. The Eurasian lynx has special insulated foot pads that allow it to walk through the thick snow and it keeps its thick winter coat clean, leaving it waterproof which prevents it from freezing to death.

A typical big cat can feed on a zebra for days, but small cats need more food, more often – and must watch out for danger. A serval in Tanzania makes 18 catches a day just to feed herself and her kittens, while the ocelot – from South American rainforests – moves its kittens to a new den every day to avoid predators.

LITTLE BIG CATS, Tuesday, 8pm

WILD ABOUT TIDDLES

Pet cats are more like wild cats than you may think. While in some ways the two are dramatically different, in others it's clear to see that they make up one big feline family.

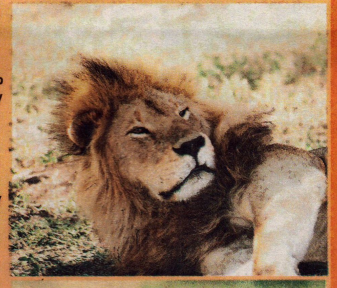
House cats and wild cats have camouflaged coats, but while a domestic cat hates getting wet, some of the big cats, including tigers, will take a dip to keep cool, especially in very hot weather.

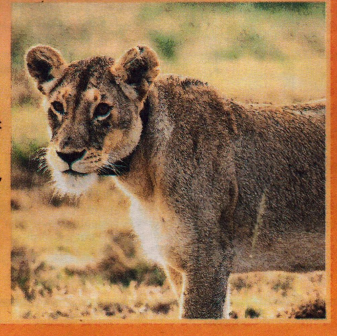
All cats, big and small, like to keep clean by licking their coats. By doing this, they also spread scent all over their body which helps cats identify one another as either friend or foe. And that's why your moggie likes to lick you!

Like house cats, lions shelter as families. But lions are the only cats who spend so much of their lives in close social groups, or prides. The female of the pride does most of the work, such as parenting and hunting, but it's the large male who always gets to feast first – hence the saying, *having the lion's share*!

Like domestic cats, the cougar, or North American puma [left], does a lot of tree climbing – but they do it for a very good reason. A cougar's favourite food, the porcupine, scrambles up there too.

THE SECRETS OF CATS, Friday, 8pm





CHEETAH'S TALE

"He's like any other brother," says 17-year-old Tanya Bruce about CP, a cheetah with which she has formed a special bond, on her parent's reserve in Namibia.

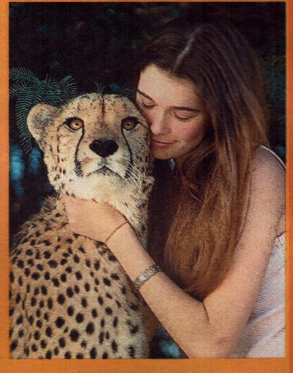
"He does what he wants, doesn't listen to what you say and shows no respect!" Tanya's parents rescue injured and orphaned cheetahs to study the endangered wild cats.

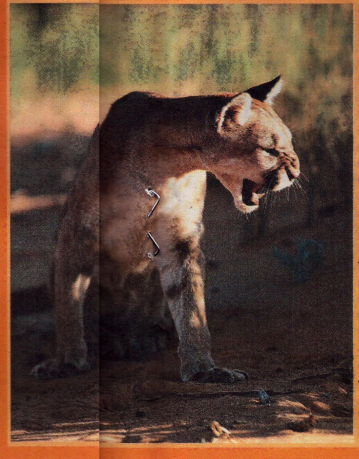
Ten years ago there were 10,000 wild cheetahs in Namibia – the largest concentration in Africa – yet 7,500 of those have since been killed by farmers and now only 5,000 live wild across the whole continent.

This, combined with the cheetah's own genetic difficulties – the species has a low birth rate and high infant mortality, makes survival tough.

Tanya and CP, which stands for conservation project, faced their biggest dilemma when Tanya decided to go to college and tried to teach CP how to survive in the wild – something cheetahs are usually taught by their mothers.

MY BROTHER THE CHEETAH, Monday, 8pm





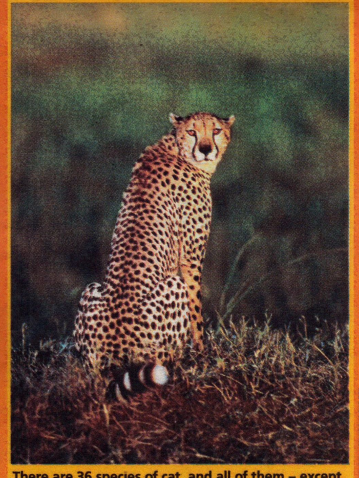
FELINE FACTS

Tigers are the biggest cats in the world. The largest – the Siberian or Amur tiger – can reach up to 3.3m in length.

A lion's roar, which can be heard up to 8km away, is made possible by the cartilage in its throat becoming rigid.

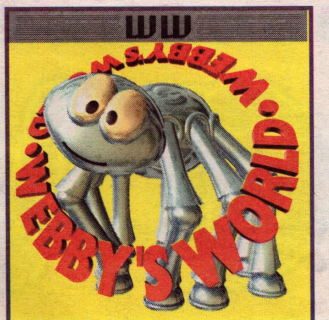
Lions are the only social cats – living in prides of up to 30 – the rest are all solitary creatures.

A cheetah's method of hunting is different from that of most cats. Cheetahs run down their prey rather than stalking and pouncing on it.



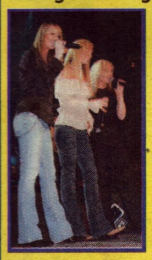
There are 36 species of cat, and all of them – except for the cheetah – have sharp, retractable claws. Cheetah's claws are non-retractable.

PICTURES: DISCOVERY NETWORKS EUROPE



www.atomickitten.com

The Kittens are busy touring the country at the moment but if you're missing Jen, Tash and Lil then their website will have you feeling Whole Again! It's designed as the girls' house, so just sneak around to see what AK goodies you can discover. There are pics, vids, music, diaries and news galore on the feline popsters.



www.disneylandparis.com

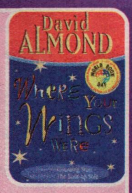
The new Walt Disney Studios open at the Disneyland Paris Resort on Saturday but you can get a preview by navigating this site. Get a rundown of the new rides and attractions, including the Rock 'N' Roller Coaster! Plus, if you want to be part of the celebrity grand opening on March 15, click here!

If you are a webhead and have discovered a great site, or have created one of your own, spin me a mail and tell me all about it on webby@sunday-times.co.uk

PICTURE: PA/YUI MOK

FRESH!

WHERE YOUR WINGS WERE
David Almond ✪✪✪✪✪



For World Book Day, this Thursday, one million specially produced £1 books will be published – including this one by Skellig author David Almond. David's great strength of creating involving characters and dialogue is plain to see in this book's five short stories. Each piece is set in a small town by the River Tyne, but even if you're not familiar with the area, the interaction of the characters feels intimate. A great read – and all for a pound too!

WORLD BOOK DAY

STEALER OF SOULS Diana Wynne Jones ✪✪✪✪✪

Another book to exchange for your £1 World Book Day Book Token is Diana Wynne Jones's short introduction to the magical worlds of Chrestomanci. Comparisons with another series about wizards is inevitable but this extract shows that the Chrestomanci series stands up in its own right. Perhaps not as immediately endearing, but still a great discovery. The other WBD book to look out for is Jeremy Strong's Vikings At School.

WORLD BOOK DAY

PRINCESS OF IRELAND ✪✪✪✪✪

With St Patrick's Day approaching on March 17, the latest Dolls of the World from Barbie is the beautiful Princess of Ireland. The auburn-haired maiden – complete with Celtic crown, velvet cloak and traditional embroidered gown – looks dreamy, although she isn't really designed to be played with. She does, however, make a great collectable and with her own stand and golden Tara Brooch she'll certainly stand out in your room, turning your other Barbies green!

BARBIE

Make sure you're ready to celebrate World Book Day!

FUNDAY

BUZZ!

NEUTRON EXPLOSION

Buzz! joins the stars at the Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius premiere bash

Nowadays if a movie wants to make it, a cool premiere party is needed to whip up a buzz about the blockbuster. The hip computer-animated adventure Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius is no different, so Buzz! set the alarm early last Sunday morning to join the stars for some madcap mayhem at London's Leicester Square.

The star of the show, Jimmy Neutron [look out for him on March 22], is certainly one resourceful kid, capable of creating gadgets galore including shrinking rays, space satellites and girl-eating plants ... not forgetting his nutty robotic dog, Goddard. You may have seen his small screen adventures on Nickelodeon – but this movie's bigger and better!

Among the top celebs wanting to join the Jimmy Neutron fun were allSTARS, Liberty X [the new name for Liberty!], five-time Olympic gold medalist Sir Steven Redgrave, Family Affairs stars Angela Hazeldine and Martin Delaney, Chelsea footballer Graeme Le Saux, CBBC's Ortis and CiTV's presenters Leah Charles and Leigh Morrison.

"I'm usually in bed at this time," announces a bleary-eyed Sam when Buzz! caught up with him and fellow allSTAR Ashley, together with Liberty X's Tony.

Ashley agrees, although he admits that he's usually managed to reach for the remote before noon! "I like watching T4 and Popworld while in bed."

"I used to enjoy a football match on a Sunday morning as well. I miss that," Sam adds.

"I don't know that much about Jimmy Neutron apart from the fact that I follow his hairstyle ... a nice big quiff," jokes Tony.

"Yeah, you and Fran from Travis," giggles Sam.

"But we are fans of computer-animated films, Shrek was brilliant," exclaims Ashley.

"Final Fantasy was really good as well," chips in Sam.

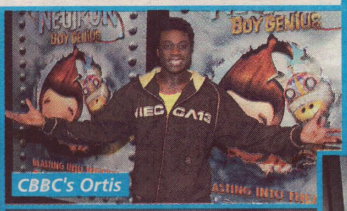
While the lads were larking about, Liberty X's Jessica told Funday deputy ed Paul all about the band's latest developments.

"We've just finished the photoshoot for the album and we're updating our look for the new single, Just A Little, which should be out at the end of April. The video sees us as jewel thieves!"

Before the lights went down, CiTV presenters Leah Charles and Leigh Morrison whipped the audience into a Jimmy frenzy before introducing the allSTARS who performed their spanking new single, Back When [below]. Listen out for it, it's a laid back track, and a real grower.

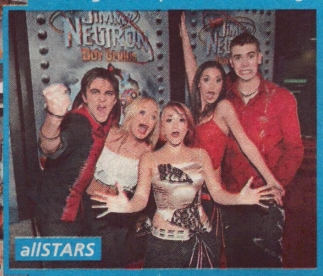
As for the Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius movie itself ... it's a real blast!

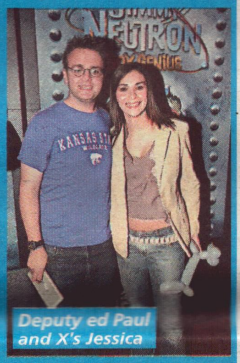
Sir Steven and family

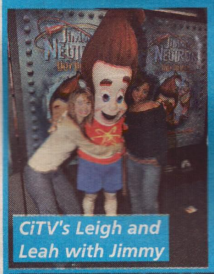

CBBC's Ortis

allSTAR Becky and friend

Liberty X and Jimmy


allSTARS


Deputy ed Paul and X's Jessica


CiTV's Leigh and Leah with Jimmy

HOT!

Video
Album

LEGALLY BLONDE [cert 12] ★★★★★

When high school princess Elle Woods is dumped by her snooty boyfriend Warner Huntington III – for not being serious enough – she decides the only way to win him back is to get herself a place alongside him at Harvard Law School. Elle's plan doesn't work out though, and law school is tougher than she expected. But being dismissed as just another dizzy blonde proves too much for Elle – and she fights back with her freshly manicured nails ... with hilarious consequences. The final court-room scene will have you in stitches!

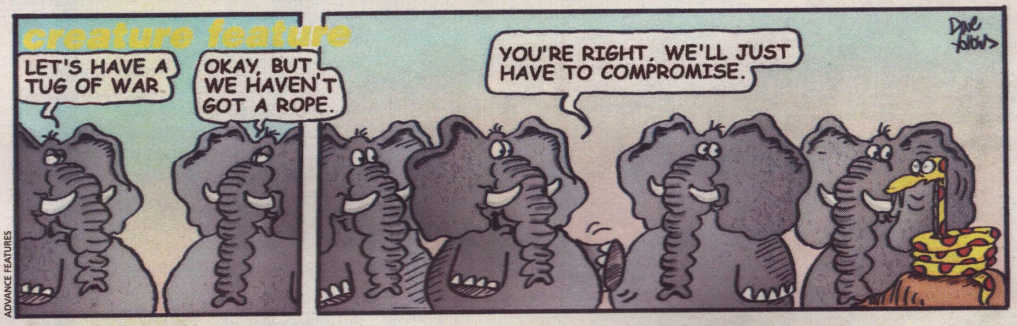
HITS 52 ★★★★☆

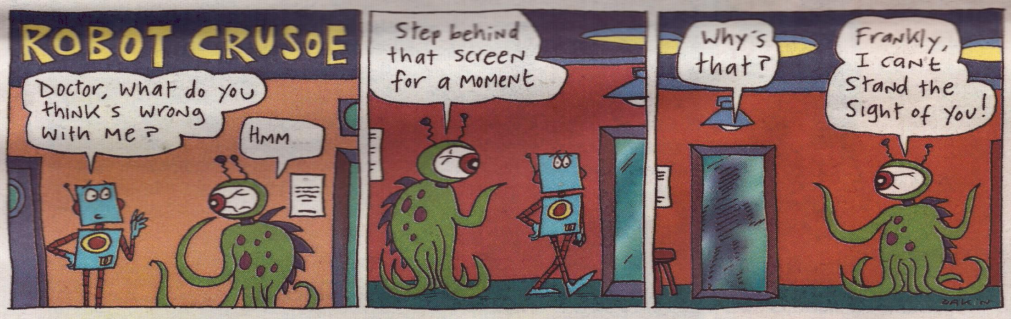
The test of a good compilation album is the number of tracks you're tempted to skip after the first couple of plays – and Hits 52 scores well! Not only do you get the recent number-one hits by Will Young and Westlife on here, you can also get top tracks by Destiny's Child, Busta Rhymes, Britney Spears, a1, Mis-Teeq and Jamiroquai. The Hits albums are usually pretty reliable, and Hits 52 does not disappoint. You'll find yourself hitting the play button again and again.

POP IDOL: A STAR IS BORN ★★★★☆

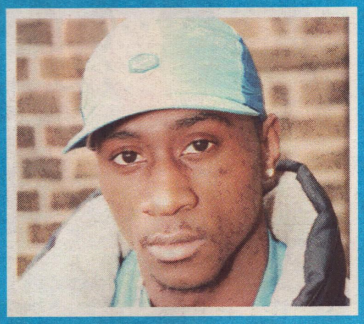
If you haven't had enough of Pop Idol just yet, then feast your eyes and ears on this video – it has it all. From Will's first audition, to the final nail-biting moments of the grand finale when he found out that he pipped Gareth to the post, and won the coveted Pop Idol title. The video also features Darius, Hayley, Zoe, Aaron and the other finalists who became such familiar faces during the series, but this is really dedicated to Will and his progress through the gruelling competition. Probably not one for Gareth fans!

PICTURES: JAMIE HUGHES





NEXT WEEK



PICTURE: TOM EVANS

Meet the new sound of British R&B ... it's Cassius Henry

They have changed their name but Liberty X still know how to have fun. So we're taking them on the new Colossus ride at Thorpe Park

Funday's new column Brainbox wows you with its knowlege. Can you beat the box?

f-mail

Send your letters, cartoons, jokes and drawings to: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU7 7GX Send your e-mail to: funday.times@sunday-times.co.uk

TWIN THING

When Mary-Kate and Ashley visit their grandfather in Paris they're soon enjoying many magnifique adventures! Passport To Paris is a hilarious movie that sees the twins falling in love with the French capital. Whether it's visiting the boutiques for a spot of shopping, checking out Notre-Dame or going for dates at the Eiffel Tower, the Olsen girls know how to party! To celebrate the release of Passport To Paris on video, Warner Home Video is giving the writer of the star f-mail a Canon camera [perfect for taking pics of any foreign trip!] and a copy of the video. The other f-mailers will receive a copy of the video and an iZone camera.

STAR

Dear f-mail,
I used to skateboard and I now blade, still trying to "keep extreme" either way. It is very noticeable that if you are seen to have a board within a metre of you, or wearing baggy trousers, then you are automatically a vandal and someone to steer clear of ... this is disgusting! I live in a smallish town and in every shop you are always watched as if you are going to steal something, just because [in their opinion] you look like a layabout. Nine out of 10 people who share an interest in these sports genuinely do it for the thrill, while pushing their physical and mental limitations. While trying to do so we are constantly frowned upon. Should people actually take the time to talk to us they will soon notice how friendly we are and how much we care for our sports!
Dan Watling, 14, Shaftesbury

Jane Hebenton, 12, Bolton

Squirt is certainly one cool customer!

FUNDAY

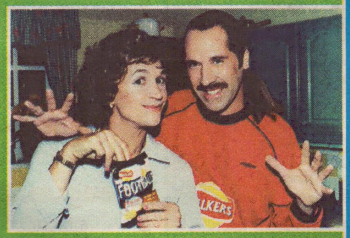
WIN IT!

COMPETITION ADDRESS Send answers to all competitions to us at: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU95 1AY. Competition deadline: March 20

You can e-mail your competition answers to: funday.comps@sunday-times.co.uk
Sorry, but only one e-mail per entrant will be accepted.

PLAY BALL

Walkers has launched a new snack in the shape of mini-footballs called Walkers Footballs. You may have spotted them on the hilarious TV adverts starring Gary Lineker as the mum of a shrunken David Seaman!



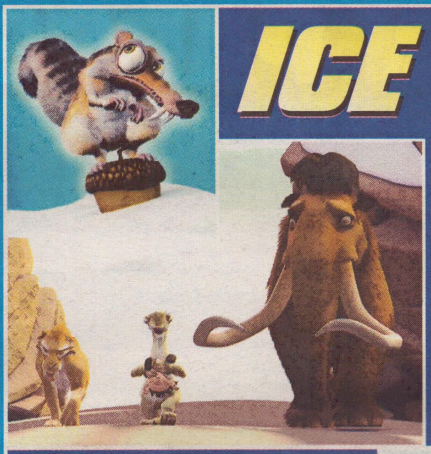
Not only are the new crisps a top snack, they also support kids' football. For every pack of Walkers Footballs sold, 1p will go towards a new scheme called the Walkers Football Fund, which will give free Umbro kit and equipment to every primary school and under-11 FA-affiliated club. For more info go to www.walkers.co.uk

Walkers is offering four readers a family ticket each [two adults, two children] to a Premiership football match of their choice. The winner will also receive an Umbro football kit. Plus, five runners-up will receive an Umbro football kit and a box of Walkers Footballs.

To enter, tell us which Premiership team David Seaman plays for.

Mark your entry SNACK and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address above.

ICE ONE



Ice Age is the new animated movie [out March 22] featuring an unlikely band of prehistoric creatures – including Manny, a woolly mammoth; Diego, a sabre-toothed tiger; and Sid, a hilarious giant sloth – who try to reunite a lost baby with his parents. It's one cool epic adventure!

The Fabulous Bakin' Boys, maker of the Cool Blue Ice Age Cup Cakes, is giving away a family weekend break [for two adults and two children] to Iceland. The prize includes a one-night stay at a four star hotel on a B&B basis, scheduled flights from Heathrow or Glasgow airports, transfers to and from the airport, Reykjavik sightseeing tour and a Blue Lagoon evening tour.

To enter, tell us which kooky female pop star comes from Iceland.

Mark your entry N-ICE and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address above.

Normal TNL competition rules apply to all Funday Times competitions

Dear f-mail,
I think that in the World Cup finals, Ireland have a good chance of doing well. They've got loads of great players like the Keanes, Ian Harte and Matt Holland. They played well against Russia and scored two good goals. Ireland have also managed to beat Holland, something that England couldn't do!
John McKenna, Belfast

Vincent Lee, Brentwood

Dear f-mail,
After hearing about the first cat to be cloned I was really upset. Humans don't have the right to "play God". Cloning should be stopped before scientists discover how to clone humans. The creation of a person should happen naturally. Life would be horrible for a person who had been cloned, they would be treated like a lab toy. Can you imagine having no family or friends to love you, or no history of where you came from?
Antony Garvey, 12, via e-mail

Dear f-mail,
Don't you think computers are really clever? Not long ago you could only type documents on a computer but now you can play games, watch DVDs, send e-mails, go onto the internet and create websites. It's a brilliant invention. A bad thing about it, though, is that it can damage your eyesight and, if you spend a lot of time on it, you become unfit. Also, in internet chatrooms you have to be careful who you talk to. In other words, the computer is great but in some ways it has gone too far.
Monica Wordsworth, 13, via e-mail

What is worse than an alligator with a toothache?
A centipede with athlete's foot!

Teacher: Give me a sentence with the words defence, defeat, and detail in it.

Pupil: When a horse jumps over defence, defeat go before detail!

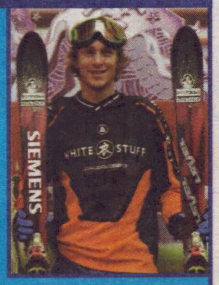
Ailbhe Donnellan, 12, via e-mail

FUNDAY

SPORT

GLENN PARSONS

Glenn Parsons is one of Britain's brightest freeriding ski stars. Funday Sport caught up with the 24-year-old hotshot as he set off to ride the off-piste powder near his home in Verbier, Switzerland



Hi Glenn, can you describe the skiing that you do?

Freeriding is basically skiing outside the pisted slopes, on rough snow and unprepared steep slopes, where the risks are much higher. It's a much more aggressive style of skiing. You have to be aware of the dangers, such as rocks and avalanches, and take full precautions with a helmet, back protection and an avalanche bleeper.

How is this extreme skiing different from skiing on the piste?

I have to be a lot more aware of the contours of the slope and pick my line carefully. I generally take extra turns and have to absorb bumps while picking my way through the terrain – so I'm more alert to my technique. Your skiing technique should be the same as on pisted slopes, but I'm just more conscious of it.

How do you decide upon the route to take down a mountain?

I have to be very careful about the line and check out my route from below. It's important to remember where the dangerous cliffs and icy areas are. I take precautions so that I'm not going to ski over a cliff and I need to know there's going to be a way to ski out of an avalanche. If I'm feeling adventurous, I'll take a more extreme line, but I'll know the area and have experienced skiers with me. I always ski with other people, it's a lot safer. The weather can change very quickly, so to ski with one or two friends of the same pace and experience is common sense.

Do you have to be a bit mad to do it?

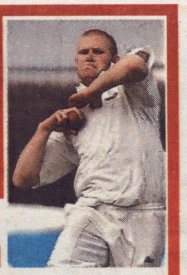
I guess what makes us freeride is the adventure. It's the pure adrenaline buzz of exploring untouched areas, testing our own ability, putting ourselves in a controlled but dangerous situation and skiing the powder snow.

What do you get up to when the season ends?

It's a sad part of the year, but you have great memories to look back on. It's a dead time in the mountains, waiting for the hiking trails and bike routes to open. Very often I take a holiday in the sun then return to the Alps for the summer activities or summer skiing up on the glaciers in Germany and Austria.

SPORT NEWS

Funday picks out the best of this week's sporting action

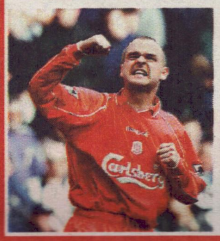


Wednesday First Test, New Zealand v England, Christchurch

England's top bowler, Darren Gough, will not be playing in the Test series against the Kiwis, so a lot will depend on Andy Caddick and Matthew Hoggard [above]. Matthew, nicknamed Shrek, could be the one to shine as his enthusiastic attitude should prompt great improvements early on. Live coverage on Sky Sports 2.

Wednesday Champions League, Barcelona v Liverpool

It's make or break for Liverpool's Champions League ambitions as they try to achieve their first win in Group B. Realistically, only a win at the Nou Camp will keep their hopes alive, so it will be up to players such as unsung hero Danny Murphy to help spring a surprise on the Spanish giants. Live on ITV Sport Channel.



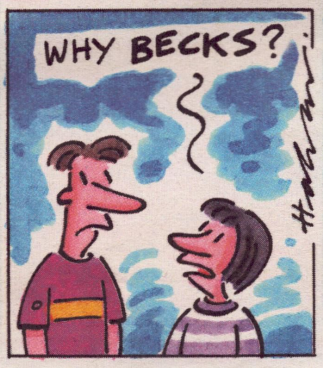
GRAVITY GAMES

Extreme Sports Channel has exclusive coverage of the Gravity Games – the Olympics of the extreme sports world – on channel 422 every day from Tuesday at 12pm, 6pm and 12am.

Extreme Sports Channel is offering one winner a Diamondback Joker BMX, a pair of inline skates from www.skateuk.com, a Reaction Stacked skateboard [plus helmet] and a copy of Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder on PlayStation, from Activision. One runner-up will receive a Reaction skateboard, helmet and Shaun Palmer game. Plus, three further runners-up will receive a copy of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 on PlayStation.

To enter, tell us the name of the cylinder skateboarders perform their tricks in.

Mark your entry SKATE and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address on page 11.



PICTURES PA/BOB COLLIER/OWEN HUMPHREYS

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